

# How to Apply?

If your organization already participates in WPS, contact your WPS POC. If you need assistance in identifying your POC, contact NCS by e-mail at [wps@ncs.gov](mailto:wps@ncs.gov), or by phone at 1.866.NCS.CALL (in the metro Washington, DC area call 703.676.2255).

The preferred method of applying for WPS is via the WPS website (<http://wps.ncs.gov>). All required forms appear at this website under the link "Request WPS." Although the online method of submitting requests for WPS is preferred, you may download the GETS/WPS Request Form at the website and submit it as an e-mail attachment to [wps@ncs.gov](mailto:wps@ncs.gov).

## Steps for requesting WPS:

- 1 The requesting organization must identify a WPS Point of Contact (POC) and alternate who will manage the WPS account for the organization. We recommend that the POC for WPS be the same as the POC for the Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS), if applicable.
- 2 The POC validates that prospective WPS user(s) meet the WPS NS/EP criteria and submits a request form for each individual.
- 3 The NCS will review the request, approve or disapprove, and notify the requesting organization.
- 4 Upon approval of the request, the NCS will coordinate with the organization to activate WPS on an existing WPS-capable phone or assist the organization in identifying a wireless service provider.

For information on where WPS is available and what wireless providers offer WPS, visit the WPS website at <http://wps.ncs.gov> under the link "carriers".



## Department of Homeland Security National Communications System

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**Tel:** 1.866.NCS.CALL (866.627.2255)  
703.676.CALL (703.676.2255) DC Metro Area

**E-mail:** [wps@ncs.gov](mailto:wps@ncs.gov)

**Web:** <http://wps.ncs.gov>

# WPS

*Wireless Priority Service*



National  
Communications  
System

# Wireless Priority Service

*(WPS) allows authorized National Security and Emergency Preparedness (NS/EP) personnel to gain access to the next available wireless radio channel in order to initiate calls during an emergency when channels may be congested. NS/EP telecommunications services are critical in the event of natural and man-made disasters that threaten the security of the United States.*

## What is WPS?

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a Report and Order on July 13, 2000, allowing commercial wireless telecommunications providers to offer Wireless Priority Service to personnel at the Federal, state, and local levels to help meet the national security and emergency preparedness needs of the Nation. This ruling establishes the regulatory, administrative, and operational framework that enables wireless service providers to offer WPS to NS/EP personnel.

The FCC rules do not require wireless service providers to offer WPS; it is a voluntary offering. Although the FCC maintains oversight for the WPS program, the Department of Homeland Security's National Communications System (NCS) is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the WPS Program.

During emergencies, wireless service providers can experience congestion in their networks, severely curtailing the ability of personnel with NS/EP responsibilities to use wireless services. To facilitate the completion of critical calls during these high usage events, WPS enables authorized NS/EP personnel priority access to the next available wireless channel before subscribers who are not engaged in NS/EP functions. Priority calls will not, however, preempt calls in progress, and WPS will not guarantee the completion of priority calls.

## Why use WPS?

Wireless telecommunications services are increasingly vital to the ability to coordinate and respond to crises. During emergency situations including natural and manmade disasters, and wireline network outages, wireless channels can become congested, thereby preventing NS/EP personnel from obtaining access. Wireless service providers offering WPS will give authorized NS/EP personnel priority access to available wireless channels during these emergency situations. In addition, WPS is complementary to, and expected to be used in conjunction with the Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS) to ensure a high probability of call completion in both the wireline and wireless portions of the Public Switched Network (PSN). WPS serves national security and emergency preparedness needs while minimizing impact on consumer access to the same wireless infrastructure.

## Who is Eligible?

Eligible users are key Federal, state, and local government and critical industry personnel who serve in NS/EP leadership positions. Five categories have been established in order to identify critical NS/EP leadership functions and determine WPS eligibility.

## How to Make a Call?

WPS is invoked by dialing "\*272" prior to the destination number on wireless instruments that have been subscribed to the WPS feature.

## How Much Does it Cost?

WPS costs are a \$10 one-time activation fee, a \$4.50 per month service fee, and \$.75 per minute for WPS (\*272) calls. WPS charges are in addition to the basic wireless subscription charges.

## Eligibility Categories

- 1 Executive Leadership and Policy Makers**  
Individuals in executive leadership and policy making roles. Examples include the President of the United States, the Secretary of Defense, selected military leaders, state governors and lieutenant governors, members of Congress, cabinet level officials, mayors and county officials, and a minimum number of senior support staff.
- 2 Disaster Response/Military Command Control**  
Individuals key to managing the initial response to an emergency at the local, state, regional, and Federal levels as well as personnel essential to continuity of government and national security functions. Examples include Federal and state emergency operations center coordinators.
- 3 Public Health, Safety, and Law Enforcement Command**  
Individuals who direct operations critical to life, property, and maintenance of law & order immediately following an event. Examples include Federal, state, and local police, fire, and emergency service leadership; search & rescue team leaders; and emergency communications coordinators.
- 4 Public Services/Utilities and Public Welfare**  
Individuals responsible for managing not only public works and utility infrastructure damage assessment and restoration efforts, but also transportation services for emergency response activities. Examples include US Army Corps of engineers; telecommunications, power, water, and sewage utilities; and transportation leadership.
- 5 Disaster Recovery**  
Personnel responsible for managing recovery operations after the initial response has been accomplished. Examples include medical recovery operations and detailed damage assessment leadership; disaster shelter coordination & management; and critical Disaster Field Office support personnel.